REPORT NO. 79-3-7

FOREST INSECT AND DISEASE MANAGEMENT UNIT
U.S. FOREST SERVICE
DORAVILLE, GEORGIA

REPORT OF AERIAL DETECTION SURVEY

LAND OWNERSHIP: Oconee National Forest, Hitchiti Experimental Forest and Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge

STATE: Georgia

AREA WITHIN SURVEY BOUNDARY: 299,326 acres

DATE: 1/4-3/79

PERCENT COVERAGE: 100%

AIRCRAFT: Cessna 182

CREW: W. A. Carothers, R. F. Bassett, C. W. Dull (Aerial Survey Team), Bob Filar, Randy Franklin (Oconee National Forest), Dean Metteaure (Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge).

REPORT PREPARED BY: W. A. Carothers

SURVEY OBJECTIVES: To detect the presence and location of southern pine beetle infestations in the survey area.

SURVEY RESULTS

Two hundred and ninety-eight spots of dead and dying pines were observed during the aerial survey (Table 1). The size of spots ranged from single tree to multiple tree spots containing 200 red and fading pines. Spots occurred on State and private lands as well as Federal lands (see attached map). Heavy concentrations of spots were observed in an area southeast of Monticello, and in areas west and southwest of Eatonton.

CONCLUSIONS

Southern pine beetle activity is increasing on Federal, State and private lands within the boundaries of the Oconee National Forest, Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge and Hitchiti Experimental Forest. The large number and sizes of new spots indicate an expanding southern pine beetle population (refer to table). Extreme drought conditions in the summer of 1978 and a high incidence of littleleaf disease may be predisposing trees to attack by southern pine beetle. The last outbreak in this area began in 1961 and lasted through 1976.

Spots detected during the aerial survey are being ground checked by Forest Insect and Disease Management personnel (Asheville and Doraville Field Offices), to verify southern pine beetle as the causal agent. The information collected during the ground check will be used for a biological evaluation. The Aerial Survey Team will continue to monitor the expanding southern pine beetle population and will report locations of infestations. Field surveillance by National Forest personnel should continue.

For any additional information, Contact:

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USFS - Southeastern Area

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Table 1. Summary of Aerial Detection Survey Data, Oconee National Forest, Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge, Hitchiti Experimental Forest and State and Private Lands, January 1979.*

Administrative Unit	Infestation Size Class				
	Singles	2-5 Trees No. Spots	6-20 Trees No. Spots	21-50 Trees No. Spots	50+ Trees No. Spots
Oconee National Forest	15	32	36	13	7
Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge	0	6	8	0	0
Hitchiti Experimental Forest	0	1	1	0	1
State & private lands	4	18	32	6	6

*For spots where estimates of affected trees were made.